1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 · SR9 Carib SR9

291 511 Above the falls at Towakaima, however, there are no shops, and at the time of my first visit, in December, 1932, only one or two prospectors. So the Indians of the upper Barama had no trade cloth for the making of sophisticated garments; women had no dresses, nor did the men have trousers. It is, therefore, the dress of these Indians which I shall describe, and it must be remembered that the description holds good for many individuals throughout the entire area, individuals who have not the means to procure the rudiments of European dress. Throughout the whole region the men usually use only a loin cloth for daily wear, even in cases where trousers or shirts are owned for "dressing up." The women, [797] on the other hand, having been instructed in Christian modesty by the good officers of the now defunct mission stations at St. Bede's and Kokerite, wear the European type of clothing more generally than the men. The dress, however, seems to be more an article of pride than a guardian of modesty. After becoming used to my presence the ladies did not hesitate to lay aside their dresses when doing heavy work which might tear or soil the garments. (See Plates 9, *b*-11, *a*, for different types of men's and women's clothing.)

The man's lap or loin cloth is called wokuru kamisharu. It is [928] almost always made of red cloth. Red appeals to the men's color sense, but also the Indians believe on the basis of experience that the red dye fades less quickly than other types. The strip of cloth is about eight inches wide and varies in length according to the size of the owner. A total length of forty inches is sufficient to allow pendant ends front and rear of a proper length on 291 a medium-sized man. Each end is decorated with a fringe of home- 531 spun cotton yarn called epururu (end thing) or sesururu (fuzzy thing). If beads are available a band of bead work may be worked into the fringe at its base. At each end of the cloth proper is usually a stripe of appliqué made of small bits of differently colored cloths sewn together and upon each other to form a pattern. These patterns (called piepaitu or piekono) have no extraneous significance at the present time. Usually the fringe on the end of the loin cloth which hangs down in back is carried up along each side of the cloth about two inches, thus distinguishing the front and the rear ends for the wearer.

291 The loin cloth is drawn between the legs and supported front

[i.e., trading shops run by foreigners — Analyst]

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291 and rear by a belt or girdle which is worn around the waist. The girdle (akondenano, anyone's girdle; akondu, girdle) is made of two cotton cords, each of which is made of four strands braided together. The two braided cords are joined together to a tie-string at either end, the two tie-strings being knotted together when the girdle is worn. A man usually wears two or more akondus. Like a belt, they rest at the sides of the body upon the eminences overlying the illiac crests, sagging downward front and rear so that the navel and the upper lumbar region are exposed. A longer piece of the loin cloth is allowed to hang in front than in back; the front piece is eighteen inches to two feet in length, the back pendant piece only a foot. When engaged in active work, a man usually tucks up the front end of the loin cloth into his girdle.

Women also wear a loin cloth (wori kamisharu tupuru), which when possible is made of blue cloth. It is usually undecorated, [531] bearing no fringe or appliqué. More rarely fringe and appliqué decorate the front end of the female loin cloth. The woman's loin cloth is shorter and slightly wider than the man's. Like the man's, it is initially passed between the legs and suspended from a girdle. In front, however, only a short wide piece hangs free, like a small apron, while the superfluous material at the rear, instead of being allowed to hang as a pendant end after being passed over the girdle, is brought back between the legs and tucked into the girdle in front, under the pendant apron-like strip which hangs down over the pelvic region. Thus the man's costume provides only a single covering of the pelvic organs, while the arrangement of the woman's loin cloth provides double protection in this region.

301 291 439 The woman's girdle (wori akondu kasuru, woman-girdle-beads) is composed of several strings of white china beads attached to tie strings at either end, as in the case of the braided cords of the man's girdle. The number of strings of beads varies with the ability of the owner to procure them through trade channels. Good bead girdles are rare at the present time because, for some unknown reason, china beads are difficult to obtain in Georgetown and are consequently seldom imported into the bush by traders. In case a woman has no beads, she contents herself with a girdle of unbraided cotton cords. The loin cloth, as I have said, constitutes the only article of clothing for women in regions where trade goods are scarce. But because the women, wherever cloth, needles,

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patina of the outer surface scraped off in places to produce a brown-on-white design.

Women usually have a small perforation in the middle of the lower integumental lip in which a common brass pin or a thorn is inserted with its point outward. The natives consider this practice more a matter of convenience than of ornamentation. The pin or thorn is removed for use whenever the owner needs a sharp point.

There is thus very little formalization in the pendants, necklaces, bracelets, armlets, fillets, and ligatures worn by the Caribs. So far as I was able to discover, none of these ornaments possess any extraneous significance which would indicate that they are regarded as fetishes or amulets.

In preparation for a dance or drinking spree both the men and women sometimes decorate their foreheads with the white underdown of the powis (Plates 11, *b* and 13, *a*). This ornamentation has been described by Mr. A. Hyatt Verrill as the "Carib tribal mark."[1] At the present time, this symbol is not used as a self-conscious designation of tribal membership by the Barama Caribs. It is worn only at sprees, at which times foreigners as a rule are absent, and at present can be considered functionally only as a type of festive ornamentation. Wild honey is spread on the forehead, and into this natural adhesive the white down feathers are stuck so that a thick fluff covers the forehead. Even its use at sprees is not invariable.

On festive occasions the women always paint their faces. The onto fruit is made into a paste and colored red with ruku (*Bixa orellana*). Different shades of red and black are made by adding lamp black to the paste, which is kept in a hollow section of dried bamboo and applied with the frayed end of a twig. Several designs are in use. Informants consistently stated that, although these designs had religious significance in the past, they were purely decorative at present.

Both sexes sometimes decorate their hair with flowers and feathers on festive occasions. The arrangement of these ornaments is quite casual, and their use is not an invariable part of the toilet.

Women usually wear their hair parted in the middle with either one or two braids hanging down the back. When the woman is at

[1] Verrill, 1917, *Tribal Relationship of the Akawoios.*

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323 has not been well dried." The proper amount of fuel must be judged at the start of the firing process. Further fuel cannot be added during the firing, as this also is said to cause the pot to crack, presumably because it interferes with the gradual rise and fall of temperature which is necessary to prevent sudden expansion and contraction.

[824] After the pot is cold, aporokune juice (unidentified) is applied inside and out. The juice, or gum, is applied raw with the hand. Then the pot is again mildly heated, and the gum is melted and can be observed running over it and seeping into the pores. It is said that if the gum is not applied, the pot soaks water and breaks. The aporokune gum gives a varnished or glazed appearance to a new pot. With use, however, the sheen disappears. For glazing, the juice of the inside bark of the tree is used, but for painting decorative designs, the juice of the outer bark is used.

323 531 Crude unformalized designs may be painted on the pot over the glaze. Whether or not a pot is painted depends upon the pride which the potter takes in her work. For this purpose, as already stated, the juice of the outside bark of the aporokune is used. It is made thick, and colored by mixing with lamp black. No other pigment is used. Different shades of brown may be produced in this manner. Clay of white, red, or gray color occurs in different vicinities throughout the area. The variety of clay color, combined with the painted designs, provides a limited diversity of decoration.

Occasionally a band of criss-cross or herring-bone decorative incisions is made around the pot a few inches from the lip. I saw no specimens in which this type of decoration took any other form. The Caribs use no other methods of decoration on their pottery than those already mentioned.

[286] Sometimes the pot is enclosed in a net of nibi plaiting, which fits closely to the surface of the vessel, and provides attachments for hanging the pot.

323 415 Plate 19, *a*, shows the various types of pots made by the Barama Caribs. These patterns may vary in size but remain essentially the same in outline. The tumai'ene (No. 1)[1] is the "buck pot," in which meat and that savory mess called pepper pot are cooked over the fire. The tuku'arimi (No. 2) is a sort of flask, always

[1] Read from left to right in Plate 19, *a*.

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rather small, in which cassarip is kept. The pyotomene (No. 3) is used as a mixing bowl. The karupu (No. 4) is a handy container for all liquids which are being used in household processes, such as the water used in pottery making, the cane juice used in mixing cassiri, etc. Nos. 5 and 6 are variants of the tumai'ene type; the small tansepake tumai'eneme (No. 5) is frequently used as a container for crushed peppers. The tukuwari (No. 7) is the large jug in which cassiri and other drinks are set to ferment when they are made in small quantities or when the family does not have the use of a wooden cassiri barrel. The tuliwa (No. 8) is used for boiling any large mess; practically speaking, its most usual use is for boiling the mash of the various kinds of alcoholic drinks preparatory to setting them for fermentation. The uses of these several kinds of pots are further illustrated in the other photographs of Carib house life.

Calabashes. The several types of calabash vessels are illustrated in Plate 19, *b*. Generally speaking, these vessels are used for two purposes, drinking and storage of liquids. The open, semi-spherical types are used as drinking mugs. The closed types, with small holes cut in the shoulders or necks, are used as containers for drinking water and other liquids. Calabashes having long necks are sometimes carried on the trail as water flasks, in which case a small hole is bored through the upper part of the neck, through which a cord is passed. The carrying of water on the trail is infrequent, however, because creeks are fairly numerous in the bush.

In preparing the calabash vessels, the fruit or gourd is picked when completely ripe, the shell cut to suit the purpose to which it is to be put, and the pap removed. The gourd is sometimes boiled whole to loosen the pap. It is then dried in the sun or about the house until it is tough and hard. Aporokune juice is sometimes applied to the exterior, but I observed no examples of painting or other decoration.

In covering the mouth of either a calabash or a pottery jug, old rags may be used, or one pot may be turned upside down over the mouth of another. These methods prevent the entrance of insects, a purpose which is also accomplished by placing a thick layer of fresh clean grass over the mouth of the vessel. To stop the mouth of a flask which is being carried on the trail, a tight bunch of grass is firmly wedged into the opening.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

BASKETRY AND PLAITING

285 462 ALL basketry and plaiting is done by the men, and it is perhaps in this department of material culture that the most aesthetically pleasing products of Carib handiwork are produced.

314 824 Nibi, a slender bush-rope, and mokru, a reed-like plant which grows in the jungle, provide the principal materials for basketry and plaiting. Nibi (*Carludovica*) is a vine about as large in diameter 285 as a lead pencil. For use in plaiting it is first split in half; then the convex outer surface is split off from each piece, producing a flat, ribbon-like strip, which is at the same time pliable and tough. This strip is then scraped with a knife. The preparation of the mokru (*Ischnosiphon* sp.) is not unlike that described by Roth.[1]

285 412 415 Articles made of basketry or plait-work are the following: fans, sifters for cassava meal (Plate 8, *a*), trays (Plate 22, *b*), cassava squeezers, (Plate 9, *a*) walishas or carrying baskets (Plate 22, *a*), wallets (Plate 9, *a*), pegalls or clothing containers, quakes or general utility openwork baskets. Fiber trusses are also sometimes attached to pots to facilitate their handling.

285 531 Fans are of the design and type of manufacture illustrated and described by Roth.[2] Sifters are usually of the type figured by Roth.[3] The simple diagonal design is produced by twilled weaving. Also a twilled design is produced giving the effect of a series of concentric squares with their corners pointing toward the middle of each side of the sifter. This type is known as the "turtle-back" design, the squares resembling the markings on the shell of the bush turtle. Other designs are produced by using artificially colored elements in the weaving, usually red and black. The entire surface of the sifter may be divided into four quarters by a cross of red or of black. Another design consists of a series of evenly spaced red dots over the entire surface, produced by the use of a red element. The weaving technique used in all cases is twill. The framework of the sifter is usually of yarriyarri. The basketry is attached to the frame as in Roth (Plate 21, *b*).[4]

415 285 531 Trays are used mainly as containers for raw cotton which is being spun. Occasionally cassava meal and other loose articles

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 137.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 206.
[3] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 71, A.
[4] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 70, B.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

285 are kept in them. They are all of the square variety with rims
●531 and rail edging, as figured in Roth.[1] Twilled weaving is used, and
415 aside from designs in one color, designs are also produced by using elements which expose the outer or brown surface alternately with those which expose the inner or light surface. The rim of the tray usually extends below the bottom of the container, serving thus as a rest which elevates the contents above the ground. In some cases wooden legs are attached at each of the four corners.

The cassava squeezer is manufactured in the manner described by Roth.[2] Two types of design are used on the tube, illustrated in Plate 9, *a*. The two examples at the right bear the kushi-ant design and suggest lines of these insects as they are sometimes observed on the trunks of trees. The specimen at the left in the illustration is the akuri-tooth design, the repetition of the two short parallel motifs suggesting the two upper incisor teeth of that animal. The dark elements of these designs are produced by weaving elements, the outer, or unscraped, sides of which are exposed.

The walisha or carrying basket is of two types, permanent and temporary. The permanent type resembles that figured by Roth,[3] composed of doubled hexagonal wickerwork on a rectangular wooden frame. The temporary type is constructed of bush-rope
415 on an oval hoop of wood, and can be made in haste by a traveller
285 in the bush. Both types are supplied with shoulder straps of
482 bush-rope and a forehead strap of the same material. Loads of eighty pounds can be carried in these pack baskets. The load is placed in the basket and covered with broad banana or plantain leaves to protect it from rain. Then the two sides of the basket are laced together with bush-rope, as closely as possible, along the sides and top, to prevent the load from becoming dislodged. When the load is set down on the trail the projecting inferior ends of the two upright sticks of the frame keep the bottom off the ground, and the entire pack is leaned against a stick stuck into the ground.

Wallets are used for carrying small personal belongings, such as tobacco or beads. I did not see the process of manufacture of any of these articles.

415 Pegalls are square baskets made in two halves, one of which
285 telescopes into the other. They are made in the manner described

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 97, B.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, pp. 282–286.
[3] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 118, F.